research programmes in specific areas of biotechnology through flexible support to expand and develop faculty research capability, and enhance research infrastructure. They are intended for institutions with a substantial investment in and commitment to biotechnology research. The number and budget of such centres will depend upont he reciept of suitable proposals and their scientific merit.

(c) No Sir, about 1000 M. Sc./M. Tech. Students in biotechnology are coming out every year out of the post-graduate teaching programmes supported by the Department of Biotechnology . The department is providing 100 junior research fellowships and 100 post doctoral fellowships every year. There are programmes to upgrade skills of mid-career scientists working in research institutions and universities. The department is continuously trying to improve the skill and knowledge levels for R&D in biotechnology.

(d) The Department of Biotechnology has instituted a number of prestigious awards including innovative young Bioscientist Awards to recognize outstanding contributions of our scientists. The Department has also made provision to train Indian scientists in leading overseas laboratories to upgrade their skills. These incentives are likely to help in retaining scientists in the country as well as the world class R&D facilities available in biotechnology are encouraging Indian scientists working overseas to return.

CII's Suggestion on Reservation in private sector

†3150. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Confederation of Indian Industries (C.I.I.) have stated that the suggestion to make legal provision for reservation in private sector is undesirable;

(b) whether it is also a fact that the private sector has also stated that if the reservation is imposed, the multinational companies will move towards other countries;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(d) whether it is a fact that the C.I.I. has suggested that it is ready to take steps to impart education and training to the backward and the deprived people and to make improvement in their skills; and

(e) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI MEIRA KUMAR): (a) to (e) The confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has not stated that it is infavour of legal provision for reservation in private sector. However, the CII is ready to undertake affirmative action in the form of scholarships and training. In May 2005, 21 captains of industry of the private sector had issued a statement wherein they have committed to expand their activites for disadvantaged persons with regard to scholarships, company-run private schools, partnership with Government school, vocational training in-house as well as in partnership with ITIs, vender development programmes etc.

Schemes for welfare of disabled persons

3151. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have introduced any new schemes this year for the welfare of disabled persons;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRIMATI SUBBULAKSHMI JAGADEESAN): (a) to (c) No new Plan scheme has been introduced so far during this year. However, major initiatives under the existing schemes are:

(1) Pilot Project for awareness generation for early detection and intervention to minimize disability since birth and during early childhood; and

(2) Making important public buildings and important educational institutions barrier free and accessible to persons with disabilities.